

House Republican Press Release

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Representative Ryan Votes in Favor of Allowing Legislature to Guarantee Privacy of Tax Information



(Hartford, CT) State Representative John J. Ryan, R-Darien, today voted in favor of allowing the General Assembly to enact legislation that would guarantee the privacy of personal and business tax records. Several weeks ago, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal issued a legal opinion that allows a legislative committee to receive individual tax information of Connecticut residents, including names, addresses and Social Security numbers.

Rep. Ryan joined fellow House Republican legislators in proposing that the Legislature's current Special Session be amended to allow for the passage of bills guaranteeing such personal information be off-limits to members of the General Assembly. The proposal was defeated in a nearly-party line, 77-56 vote.

The Legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee is currently conducting a study of the state's tax system. Committee staff recently sought data from the corporate tax and personal income tax filings from the state Department of Revenue Services. Blumenthal's opinion referenced a 1993 state law, which he categorized as vague, in granting such access to the data.

"Why would anyone want Hartford politicians to have access to your personal and family tax information?" said Rep. Ryan. "It should be obvious that the potential for misuse and abuse with the sensitive information contained in tax returns is significant. It is absolutely outrageous that the Democrat legislative majority would not even consider looking at this issue, and apparently is only interested in protecting Big Brother government's ability to snoop into our private lives, and not interested in protecting the rights of its citizens."

Following the release of the Attorney General's opinion, a representative from the Connecticut Business and Industry Association also raised the possibility that a business' tax return information could later be handed to non-government entities. In addition, Governor M. Jodi Rell expressed concern over a number confidentiality issues involved with granting access to personal tax information.

According to a draft scope of the tax study, the first phase will examine the state and local tax structure to determine how well the system performs based upon naturally

recognized criteria. Depending on the outcome of the first phase and the desire of the committee, the second phase may examine various alternatives for change, their potential benefits and drawbacks and how different options might impact different taxpayers in the state.